

## Summary/Final Minutes – Work Session – April 18, 2013

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### **Savannah City Government SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES MAYOR AND ALDERMEN WORK SESSION April 18, 2013 – 9:00 am**

PRESENT: Mayor Edna B. Jackson, Presiding  
Alderman Van R. Johnson, II Mayor Pro-tem  
Alderman Tony Thomas, Chairman of Council  
Alderman Mary Osborne, Vice-Chairman of Council  
Aldermen John Hall, Carol Bell, Mary Ellen Sprague,  
Tom Bordeaux and Estella Shabazz

City Manager Stephanie S. Cutter  
City Attorney W. Brooks Stillwell

Mayor Jackson called the meeting to order.

#### Legislative Update

Jim Burgess, Legislative Liaison for the City, provided a final update from the 2013 session of the Georgia Legislature. Savannah's governmental issues included Mayor Jackson's request to restore the fire boat funding request (firefighting vessel) initially included in the 2014 budget, but later removed during the Green Door process, the Department of Transportation, Project Landscaping requiring coordination with City Public Works on tree removals in cities with tree and landscaping ordinances, Compulsory High School Attendance which raises the age of mandatory education from 16 to 17, and Bullying in Schools requiring school principals to report incidents of bullying and school councils to develop and implement preventive strategies. For grades 6-12, third time offenders in a school year would be guilty of a misdemeanor and subsequent offenses in the same school year would result in a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.

Other items discussed were Water Rate Differentials prohibiting higher city water rates outside boundaries of municipalities, Cell Tower Siting which makes extensive alterations in the way local governments review and regulate cell towers, Municipal Broadband Preemption making it difficult or impossible for some cities to provide high speed internet and broadband services, was defeated with the help of Savannah's legislation and other Georgia cities. The discussion concluded with Coin-operated Amusement Machines transferring the administration and enforcement of coin-operated amusement machines from the Department of Revenue to the Georgia Lottery Commission, Firearms Legislation authorizing people with a license to carry concealed weapons into government buildings unless entry is restricted or screened by security personnel, and De-annexation legislation authorizing a nonbinding advisory referendum to determine whether Bacon Park should be de-annexed from the City.

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### Traffic Calming Program

Mike Weiner, Director of Traffic Engineering gave an overview of Savannah's Traffic Calming Program and an update on current projects. The presentation covered the programs history commencing in 2010 with adoption of the Traffic Calming Policy, appointment of a 9-member committee in 2012 and acknowledgement of the first two neighborhoods engaged in a calming process of 6 hot spot streets in 2013. Mr. Weiner provided a traffic calming score matrix, tables depicting local residential and residential collector routes, maps showing project areas for neighborhood one and two, and steps of the traffic calming engagement process. Also included was a project status from 2012 through April, 18, 2013, milestone objectives from May through August 2013, and goals from August through November 2013.

### Greater Savannah International Alliance Update

Kent Harrington, Chairman of the Greater Savannah International Alliance (GSIA) gave a slide presentation that covered the charter, plans and initiatives. The organization's mission is to enhance greater Savannah's recognition as a center of international commerce, culture, education, and tourism. GSIA's plan encompasses outreach to business, education, and civic groups in 2011, plan and initiatives in 2012, and implementation in 2013. Their communications resulted in sharing information, utilizing education as a resource and using leverage and outreach to meet the needs of the community.

Their initiatives incorporate a GSIA web site, an International Education Consortium, and a Communications and Outreach Initiative. International education is a goal of the organization and these students spent \$21.8 billion nationwide and \$463 million in the state of Georgia. GSIA is supported by Georgia Southern University, SCAD, Savannah State University, Armstrong Atlantic State University and Savannah Technical College. Relationships were formed with sister cities from 1974-2011 and GSIA is working on a trade mission with China. The presentation culminated with a discussion of country orientation and protocol and next steps that included staff support, budget items and an evaluation of their process and product.

### Comcast Update

Andy Macke, Vice President of Government and Community Affairs presented a Savannah Community Update that covered improving the customer experience by promoting the Comcast customer guarantee, enhancing technical training, providing clear pricing and more convenient service options. He provided a graph showing 311 customer service hotline calls from December 2011 through March 2013, discussed customer service availability, reviewed the town hall meetings held in 2012 stressing that Comcast will continue to have these type of neighborhood-level meetings. Also discussed were fiber network enhancements, broadband adoption and digital literacy, along with two Savannah volunteer opportunities – Playground Beautification held at Wesley Community Centers of Savannah on April 23, 2013 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and School Outdoor Beautification held at Haven Elementary School on April 27, 2013 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and attended by Alderman Shabazz

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Mr. Macke introduced Shannon Dulin, the new Community Liaison who has been instrumental in securing neighborhood visibility through collaborative relationships with the West Broad Street YMCA, AWOL Digital Connectors Graduation, Downtown Neighborhood Association, School District Town Halls, Savannah-Chatham County Schools Leadership Meeting, Parent University, and the Georgia PTA/District 6 Spring Conference.

### Sandwich Board Update

Artis Wood gave a brief historical review of Broughton Street and an update on sandwich boards along the streetscape. She provided photographs and articles along with board dimensions, and stated that there are two hundred entrances on Broughton Street alone. She listed great stores and restaurants, short blocks, wide sidewalks, and pedestrian-scaled buildings as some of the components that distinguish Broughton Street as Savannah's "main boulevard." She noted her disapproval of these message boards and said they would create a huge clutter and set a theme for this corridor and the remainder of the City.

### Executive Session

Upon a motion by Alderman Osborne, seconded by Alderman Shabazz and unanimously carried, approval was given to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel.

Upon a motion by Alderman Osborne seconded by Alderman Shabazz and unanimously carried, approval was given to come out of Executive Session where no votes were taken.

### Council broke for lunch

City Manager Stephanie Cutter presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of April 18, 2013. The agenda is attached and made a part of the permanent record.

Mayor Jackson adjourned this meeting.



Dyanne C. Reese, MMC, Clerk of Council